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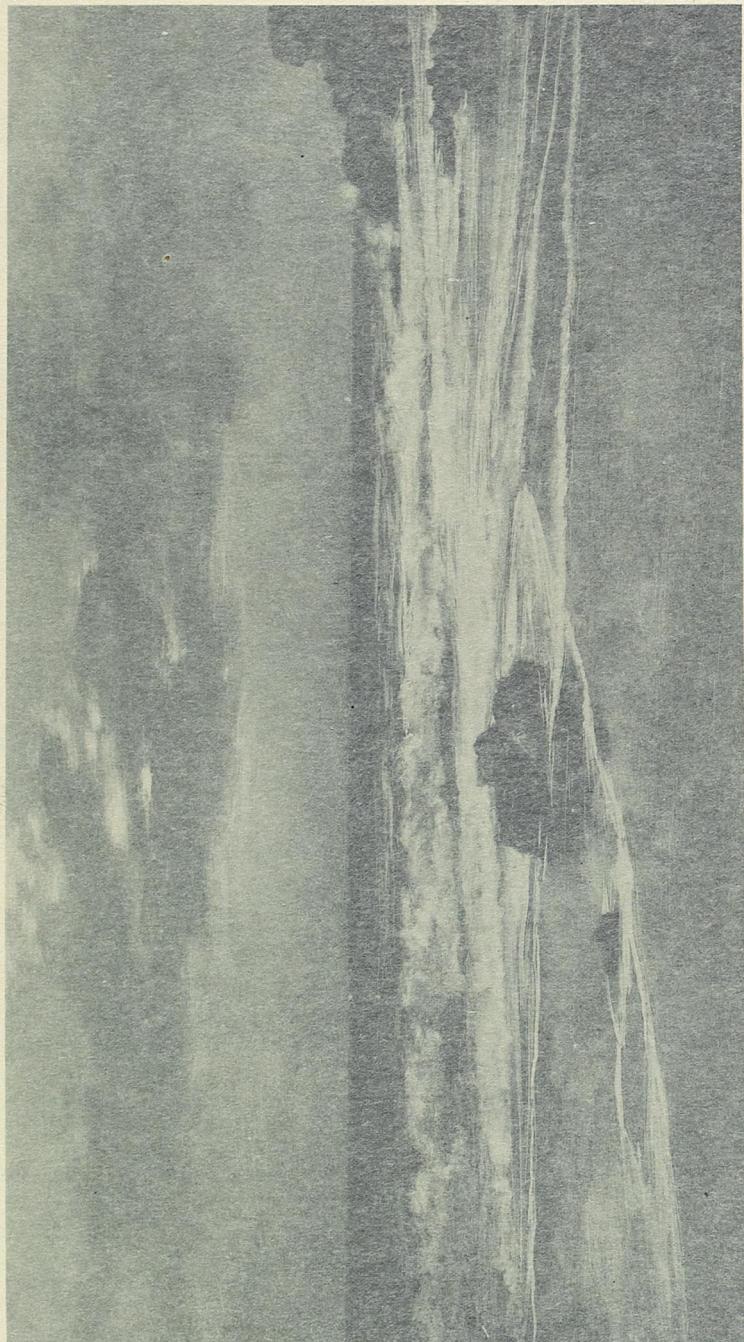
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THE SURF AT MACKINAC  
FROM AN ORIGINAL MONOTYPE  
BY BRUCE HORSFALL





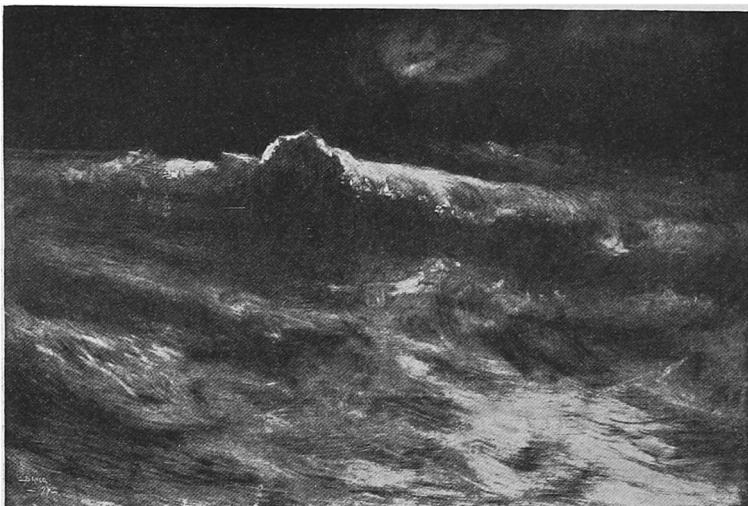
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AUGUST, 1898.

# BRUSH AND PENCIL.

VOL. II.

No. 5.



THE WAVE.

Owned by Mr. H. F. Farney.

## BRUCE HORSFALL — A MONOGRAPH.

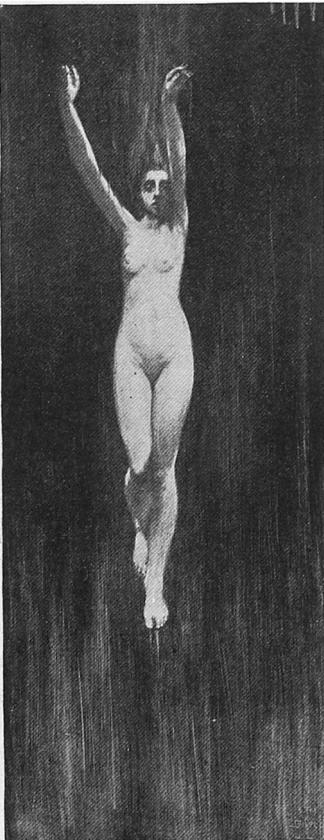
“There is no excellence without labor.”

AT intervals during the past year or two there have appeared upon the walls of our galleries, in some exhibition or other with its usual number of impressionistic attempts, one or two rich notes of monochrome which have been very attractive to the eyes after some especially riotous coloring.

Upon further investigation we discovered the print was simply an example of an art only recently revived, after having been neglected for a century or more. So utterly obscure had this work become that even after the prints began to appear in exhibitions and attract attention many believed them to be an entirely recent discovery. Today, after all that has been written about “monotypes,” there are still many artists who are ignorant of the process and do not recognize a print when they see it.

For those to whom the term "Monotype," which they found in their catalogue had no meaning whatever, there was usually plenty of information ready at hand, in the presence of a group of art students in the galleries of the Art Institute, studying the print to discover, if possible, what methods had been employed, and the effect produced by the use of certain paper, press, etc. As the novelty of "something new in art" was of great interest to the student, the more so because after its sudden revival, the magazines gave the matter quite extensive notice. So far, though many of the examples shown here have been undeniably artistic, few prints have suggested more than the result of a passing whim of the artist, something one might have dallied with in an idle hour.

In the works of Bruce Horsfall we find the idea carried beyond these lines into the field of serious picture-making. He has given us another plain demonstration of the truth of the old adage that "a thing worth doing is worth doing well." He saw in it greater possibilities than the pastime it had been to many so far, and made us realize that because it was in a way a novelty it need not be merely a trifle. We have been led to believe also that monotypes could never have any serious place in art because of the unreliability of the process. Mr. Horsfall having taken the matter seriously, has, with perseverance, brought the monotype process to a state of perfection where results need no longer be "speculative." Hence his large prints—twelve or more of which were sent on here from the East, reproductions of a number appearing in these pages—will be a revelation to many who have never seen a monotype treated seriously as a picture nor made on a plate of such dimensions.



THE RAINDROP.

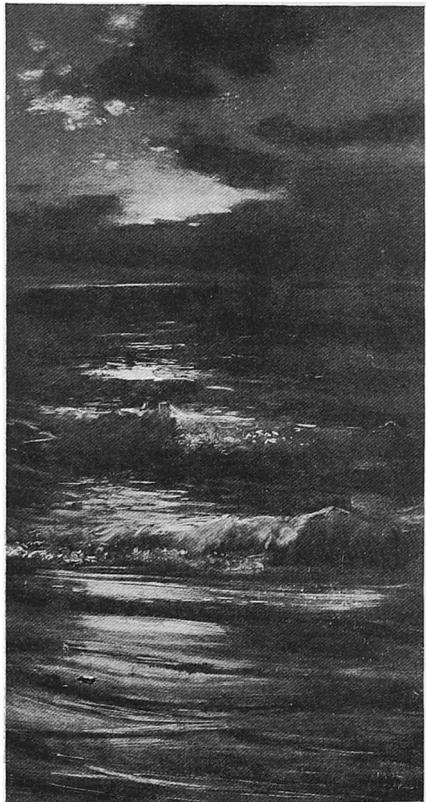
Green is the prevailing color in this collection of prints, and, as the subjects are mostly moonlight effects and marines, they lend themselves very agreeably to this cool monochrome.

Only absolute knowledge, the result of repeated experiments, can be the means of assuring such perfectly satisfactory prints. There is nothing in any of these to suggest chance or happy accident, which in many instances the observer gives the artist credit for. Nor are they "offhand" work. Nothing has been slighted. All is serious and honest, composed and executed with the same care as the most important exhibition picture, yet full of spontaneity. Drawing is never in a single instance sacrificed because it might interfere with a "broad effect," nor is charm of detail overlooked to preserve some accidentally clever brush stroke.

The unusual evenness of tone, together with the solidity of the paint in several instances, gives some of these prints the effect of photogravures. This result is due to the perfectly uniform pressure obtained by using an etching press for the printing, and also to the paper, which is of such an absorbent quality that no color is wasted

nor remains on the plate after the impression has been made.

The monotypes seen heretofore somewhat resembled mezzotints when in a monochrome, and sometimes, as in the instance of a number of charming prints shown at the Institute in the exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society, a few made in delicate polychrome had quite the appear-



MOONLIGHT.

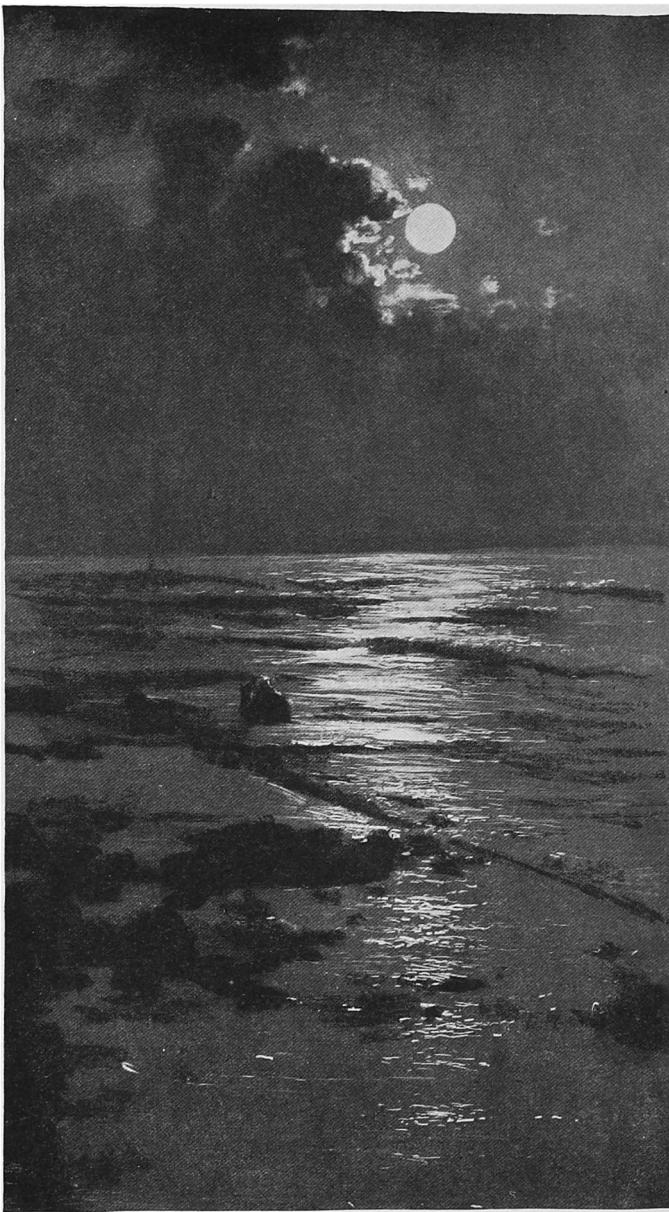
ance of color etchings. By applying the paint to the plate with brushes, rags and fingers, and taking it out likewise, a variety of textures are suggested; but until these prints by Mr. Horsfall were shown, the monotypes exhibited had relied solely upon clever brushwork for their charm, which was peculiar to this especial process as the effect was almost impossible to be obtained in any other medium. His aims and methods being far more serious than we have known heretofore, the results which followed must necessarily show this quality, and we have, therefore, an entirely new conception of the monotype in these works, which are of a character totally different from the ordinary monotype.

The following short sketch of the career and work of Mr. Bruce Horsfall is from notes furnished by the courtesy of Mr. Orson Lowell.

Bruce Horsfall was born in Clinton, Iowa. His first instructions in drawing were received from J. M. Stick—a pupil of Kaulbach—and under this teacher he worked for three years. He was, however, first of all, a devoted student of nature, as his minute and conscientious pen-and-ink drawings made during these years prove; these studies of plant and insect life are so fine and closely done as to have the appearance of copperplate etchings.

Like many another young Western artist, he spent some time in Chicago, where he did not care to remain, apparently, but went to Minneapolis, and finally settled in Cincinnati. There he spent three years more in study, and after having entered the Duveneck classes, won a European scholarship of two years. During his first year abroad he studied in the Munich school, spending the summer in the country working out of doors. Before returning to the States he had a few months in Paris, finally coming home at the time of the World's Fair, and it was at this exposition that he showed "The Evening Hour," the result of his last year in Munich.

This picture was exhibited in one of the late exhibitions of the Society of Western Artists. It was full of a poetic charm, and suggested that delightful atmosphere of artistic life in a great art center which the student so craves and in which he thrives and develops best. In this painting, the problem of conflicting lights, which is an exceedingly difficult one, was handled in such a masterly manner that the result left nothing to be desired. The picture represents Mr. Horsfall's brother standing beside a piano, giving a violin lesson to a little girl. The figures are partly in silhouette against a window through the curtained panes of which the uncertain twilight glimmers; the more positive lighting comes from a lamp with a green shade on the top of the piano. This green shade makes a delicious note of color in the picture—all the rest being subdued and neutral.



THE BEACH AT MACKINAC.

I trust to memory for the description of the composition, and believe it is nearly enough correct to recall it to those who saw it at this exhibition, and who having seen it cannot fail to remember its peculiar and quiet charm.

For three years after his return Mr. Horsfall worked at the Rookwood potteries, in Cincinnati, designing for the ware as well as painting in it. Mr. Orson Lowell, who has had the good fortune to see these designs, declares "they are simply exquisite."

During two years, while in Cincinnati, he also had a studio of his own, and it was while teaching at the Art Student's League there, in the spring of 1897, that he incidentally took up monotypes.

The following summer he spent in the vicinity of Mackinac, continuing his experiments, and the present collection of prints is in part the result of this trip.

In June, 1898, Mr. Horsfall went to New York, where he is at present doing illustrations — his dainty decorative work and delicate flower studies having attracted the keen eyes of Mr. Drake, of the *Century* and *St. Nicholas*.

In looking through Taine's "Philosophy of Art," I came across some passages which I think very truly express what I should wish to say in a general way with regard to the work of Mr. Horsfall. Here are a few of his observations on Art and Nature :

"Nature as nature, no matter under what form — human, animal, vegetable, inanimate — with her irregularities, trivialities, variations, has a *raison d'être*. . . .

"Once understood, one loves her ; she becomes an endless source of enjoyment.

"The aim of art is not the alteration, but the interpretation of nature ; it is by reason of sympathy that she renders her beautiful.

"When art has for her domain, not a pinnacle but the whole vast expanse of life, she offers to each intellect a distinct field. The ideal is narrow, and on her heights there is room for but two or three geniuses — the real is immense — she can furnish room for fifty talents. A peaceful and happy harmony permeates all her works — she is restful to behold — the soul of the artist, like that of his subject, is '*en équilibre*.' One feels one could be well at ease in his pictures — like them, he seems content to live. 'Nature to him seems Good.'"

B. OSTERTAG.